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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 105791

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/29/2018

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SUBJECT: (SBU) Secretary Rice's September 29, 2008
meeting with Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin

¶1. (U) Classified by: Uzra Zeya, Deputy Executive
Secretary, S/ES, Department of State. Reason 1.4.(d)

¶2. (U) September 29, 2008; 9:00 a.m.; New York.

¶3. (U) Participants:

U.S.

The Secretary

SCA Deputy Assistant Secretary George Krol

DRL Assistant Secretary David Kramer

SCA Notetaker Martin O'Mara

Kazakhstan

Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin

Ambassador to the United States Erlan Idrissov

Permanent Representative to UN Byrganym Aitimova

Chairman MFA Committee on International Information

Erzhan Ashikbayev

Deputy Chief of Protocol Bolat Assabayev

¶4. (SBU) SUMMARY. Secretary Rice met with Kazakhstani
Foreign Minister Tazhin for 30 minutes on September 29
to discuss bilateral relations, including the Secretary's
upcoming visit to Astana, Kazakhstan's support for
Afghanistan, and its democratic reform agenda as
Kazakhstan prepares for the OSCE Chairmanship. They
also discussed the Russia-Georgia conflict. END
SUMMARY.

The Secretary's Visit to Astana

¶5. (SBU) Foreign Minister Tazhin began by welcoming the
Secretary's upcoming visit to Astana. He confirmed that
President Nazarbayev and Prime Minister Masimov will be
available to meet with the Secretary.

Increasing Support for Afghanistan

¶6. (SBU) Tazhin described Kazakhstan's growing
assistance program for Afghanistan. In 2008, Kazakhstan
was providing budgetary funds to support education,
medical, and road construction projects. Astana planned
to build on the current program by funding additional
projects in 2009-2011. In addition to its special
assistance program, Kazakhstan intended to send staff
and medical officers to the International Security
Assistance Force headquarters as a first step toward
enhanced cooperation with NATO on Afghanistan.

¶7. (SBU) Tazhin said that PM Masimov will visit
Afghanistan in late October to assess potential
investment projects. Kazakhstani investors made an
ambitious bid last year to develop a copper mine
project, but had lost the tender to a Chinese

competitor. This was an important learning experience. Kazakhstan's government and private sector were committed to identifying investment projects in Afghanistan.

¶8. (SBU) The Secretary urged Tazhin to stay engaged with Afghanistan. She noted Afghanistan has very limited natural resources. The Kabul government's budget of \$2.5 billion pales in comparison with Baghdad's budget of \$49 billion. Afghanistan can only succeed if it develops as a land bridge linking South and Central Asia. For that reason, Kazakhstan, with its economic strength and own strategic vision for the region, can play a pivotal role in assisting Afghanistan and advancing regional integration.

Kazakhstan's Road to Europe (and OSCE Chairmanship)

¶9. (SBU) Tazhin said Kazakhstan is pursuing a strategic national program called the "Road to Europe" in 2009-2011. The program set three major goals. First, Kazakhstan seeks to step up cooperation with European countries in energy, joint transportation networks, and in conforming its regulations and standards with EU norms. Secondly, Kazakhstan will liberalize its political system by improving media and electoral laws and introducing reforms in state administrations. Thirdly, Kazakhstan will use the program to identify its priorities as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation as in Europe.

¶10. (SBU) The Secretary responded she was encouraged by Kazakhstan's push to reform its media and electoral laws. She emphasized the importance of the future Chairman's strong support for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Kazakhstan can be a very stable force in the region. As Central Asia's most highly developed and resource-rich country, Kazakhstan has the potential to influence positively its neighbors. Kazakhstan can demonstrate leadership in the region by pushing its domestic reform agenda forward. The United States is committed to working with Kazakhstan to advance the reform agenda.

Georgia-Russia Crisis

¶11. (C) Tazhin noted that Georgia's conflict with Russia has significant implications for Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is the largest investor in Georgia, owning assets such as the Batumi oil terminal, the gas infrastructure in Tbilisi, and hotels and resorts. Kazakhstan's private sector is expressing its concerns to Astana about its investments in Georgia.

¶12. (C) Tazhin said that Kazakhstan intends to continue its very open dialogue with Russia. Kazakhstan had expressed to Russia its understanding of the "humanitarian" basis for Russia's actions in Georgia. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan firmly supports the principle of territorial integrity and negotiations to reach a settlement over the conflict zones.

¶13. (C) Tazhin said that Foreign Minister Lavrov had told him in their recent meeting that Russia is not against the principle of territorial integrity and has no claims on other neighbors, but it views South Ossetia and Abkhazia as unique cases. Tazhin does not believe that Russia intends to challenge the territorial integrity of other potential zones of conflict such as Ukraine. He emphasized that Kazakhstan will continue to engage the United States as a strategic partner as Kazakhstan deals with the long-term implications of the recent conflict.

14.(C) The Secretary noted that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in particular China and Kazakhstan, sent a powerful signal to Russia that its actions in Georgia are unacceptable. South Ossetia and Abkhazia are not analogous to Kosovo. The Secretary expressed concern that Russia has created a dangerous principle by issuing Russian passports to people living in places like Georgia's conflict zones. Russia's disregard for territorial integrity in order to protect citizens living outside of Russia is reminiscent of Germany's pre-WWII policy towards Sudeten Germans. The Secretary noted that Russia needed to recognize its Georgia adventure and that its recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were big mistakes.

U.S.-Russia Relations

¶15. (C) The Secretary said the U.S.-Russia partnership will continue but is damaged. Recalling her meeting with FM Lavrov in New York, the Secretary said the United States and Russia agreed to continue to work together in key areas of cooperation, such the UN resolution on Iran, the Middle East Quartet, and arms control. In their meeting, the Secretary cautioned Lavrov not to exacerbate the conflict with Georgia by establishing military bases and Russian businesses in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Secretary emphasized that the U.S. objective now is to maintain constructive bilateral relations with Russia as the United States moves through the presidential transition.

IAEA Board of Governors

¶16. (C) The Secretary stated that Kazakhstan would be an excellent IAEA board member given its nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament credentials. She encouraged Tazhin to clarify Kazakhstan's status in the Middle East/South Asia regional group and to apply for the Board of Governors seat next year. The United States will support Kazakhstan as it pursues this approach. We are supporting Afghanistan's candidacy this year because it offers the best chance of defeating Syria's bid for the seat. Tazhin indicated that Kazakhstan would postpone its candidacy until the next cycle.

Certifying Kazakhstan's Human Rights Record

¶17. (SBU) Tazhin said that Kazakhstan does not understand why the U.S. Congress requires the State Department to certify every six months that Kazakhstan has made significant improvements in the protection of human rights and civil liberties under Section 698(a) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Act. The certification requirement casts Kazakhstan, but not Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, into the same category as Uzbekistan and Russia. He added that the certification requirement applies to an insignificant amount (\$19 million) of bilateral assistance funds. Astana views this request as inappropriate for a strategic partner of the United States. The Secretary said that she would look into the matter and address it during her upcoming visit to Astana.

Jackson-Vanik Amendment

¶18. (SBU) Tazhin asked the Secretary for the Department's support in "graduating" Kazakhstan from the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Kazakhstan has an exemplary

record of respecting the right to emigrate. Senator Lugar announced his support for lifting Jackson-Vanik earlier this year. Lifting Jackson-Vanik is important because Kazakhstan hopes to complete its negotiations with the United States of the World Trade Organization bilateral accession agreement.

¶19. (C) The Secretary noted that while the Jackson-Vanik legislation was introduced as a measure to promote Jewish emigration, the U.S Congress now uses Jackson-Vanik to express its views on World Trade Organization issues. For that reason, Kazakhstan is now caught up in the politics surrounding U.S. trade policy. In closing, the Secretary assured Tazhin that the United States is committed to concluding a strong bilateral WTO accession agreement and removal of Jackson-Vanik.

RICE